

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL INTERVIEW

1. ABIDJAN-BASED VOIX DE L'AFRIQUE IN ITS JANUARY ISSUE CARRIES AN "EXCLUSIVE" INTERVIEW WITH MALIAN PRESIDENT TRAORE AS PART OF ITS COVER STORY ON MALI. THE INTERVIEW, REPRINTED BY MALI'S OFFICIAL DAILY L'ESSOR A DAY AFTER VOIX DE L'AFRIQUE WENT ON SALE IN BAMAko, PROVIDES UNCUSTOMARILY PRECISE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT MALI'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POLITICS. THE USUALLY RETICENT AND INACCESSIBLE PRESIDENT MADE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS OF INTEREST:

2. ON THE NEW POLITICAL PARTY. PRESIDENT TRAORE SAID THAT THE INSTITUTIONS FORESEEN IN MALI'S 1974 CONSTITUTION (COMMENT: THE PRESIDENT AND HIS GOVERNMENT, THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND THE JUDICIARY. END COMMENT) ALL STEM FROM THE NEW UNION DEMOCRATIQUE DU PEUPLE MALIEN. YET THE CENTRAL ORGAONS OF THAT

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PAGE 02 BAMAko 04751 301828Z

PARTY, THE NATIONAL COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE BUREAU, WILL NOT BE INSTITUTED UNTIL THE END OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, OR JUNE 2, 1979. THE PRESIDENT ALSO NOTED THAT SINCE THE PARTY WOULD JOIN THE EFFORTS OF ALL ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION, AND SINCE THE MILITARY CURRENTLY HELD POWER IN MALI, THE ARMED FORCES COULD BE EXPECTED TO PLAY A PARTICULAR ROLE IN THE

NEW PARTY.

3. ON SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT FORCE WAS NOT THE ONLY SOLUTION TO SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS. MALI COULD ONLY REJOICE THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ON RHODESIA WAS TAKING PLACE. NONETHELESS, IF THE CONFERENCE FAILED, THE NATIONALISTS WOULD TAKE BY FORCE WHAT WAS ARBITRARILY DENIED THEM IN GENEVA. IF WHITE REGIMES REMAIN INTRANSIGENT, VIOLENCE COULD ENGULF ALL OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

4. ON REGIONAL AFFILIATIONS. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT ECOWAS AND CEAO WERE COMPLEMENTARY ORGANIZATIONS. MALI WAS VERY SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE LOME CONFERENCE.

5. ON THE NEW ECONOMIC ORDER. UNCTAD-NAIROBI WAS A FAILURE, ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT, BUT ECONOMIC CONFERENCES OF THAT KIND DID HAVE A POSITIVE SIDE IN THAT THE DEVELOPING STATES COULD MAKE THEIR PROBLEMS KNOWN WITH ONE VOICE. THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE IN PARIS WAS SIMILARLY STALLED, BUT THE PRESIDENT WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT THE CURRENT ECONOMIC ORDER WOULD EVENTUALLY BE CHANGED.

6. COMMENT: THE INTERVIEW PROVIDED, FOR THE FIRST TIME, ELEMENTS OF A ROADMAP FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MALI'S NEW PARTY. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT THE RULING MILITARY COMMITTEE IS NOT GOING TO SHARE POWER BEFORE THE END OF ITS FIVE-YEAR TRUSTEESHIP. THE INTERVIEW PROVIDED AS WELL THE FIRST OFFICIAL MENTION OF THE ARMY'S FUTURE ROLE IN THE PARTY ORGANIZATION.

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PAGE 03 BAMA KO 04751 301828Z

7. ON THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT, THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON RHODESIA IS THE MOST MODERATE MALIAN PRONOUNCEMENT TO DATE, CONTRASTING SHARPLY WITH THE OBSERVATIONS OF MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL HALIDOU TOURE, WHO IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION SAW THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AS A PLOY TO DELAY PROGRESS TOWARD INDEPENDENCE. MALI, ONE OF THE LAST SIGNATORIES OF THE ECOWAS PROTOCOLS, IS APPARENTLY NOW AN OFFICIAL PARTISAN OF INCREASED REGIONAL COOPERATION.

8. WE ARE POUCHING MAGAZINE TO AF/W.
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